Midna Finally Gets her Comeuppance
Chapter I
By Yu May

Link had been trapped in the form of a wolf for weeks now, his voice replaced by only fierce growls. As he darted through the forest on all fours, his heightened senses of smell and hearing taking in more than he ever imagined, he remembered when he first awoke in the wizard Zant's prison, awaiting his fate, when he was suddenly freed by a small, mischievous imp named Midna. She wielded dark magic and seemed to take pleasure in teasing Link about his curse.

He remembered her taunting words as they made their escape, "You're quite the beast now, aren't you? Ha! Don't worry, I won't abandon you like your human so-called friends have." Link couldn't speak a word in reply, but he could feel the shame and frustration welling up inside him.

With no other ally in the world, Link had followed Midna's guidance since that day. Midna seemed to take pleasure in leading him around the countryside on a wild goose chase, taunting him all the while. "Come on, doggie! Giddy up!" she would laugh, sitting on his back and slapping his haunch as if he were her horse. Once, he had snarled and thrust forward with such tremendous speed, Midna had lifted off his back. As he felt her seat smack down against him with an audible bump, Midna only let out a soft, "Oh!" of surprise. Glancing back, Link saw her clinging to his fur tightly to hold on, a look of stung pride on her face. It was Link's only little triumph for weeks. She smacked his haunch, he'd found a way to smack hers, even without his hands.

His instincts as a wolf were sharp, but he couldn't help but feel a sense of loss at his inability to communicate with human beings. The long days of foraging in the country and skirting the edges of Castle Down had finally paid off. Midna had caught wind of rumors of a magical blade that could break Zant's black magic.

Sniffing the air to detect shadow beasts, the monsters created by poor souls enslaved by Zant's dark magic, he could smell the faint scent of Midna's dark magic and hear the soft rustle of her long hair, which glowed with a magical inner light. He couldn't help but wonder if Midna was serious about finding a way to free him, or if she was simply toying with him for her own amusement.

As they finally reached their destination, a ruined, stone temple shrouded in mist, Midna finally addressed Link's curse. "So, you're unhappy as a wolf now? Hmm, I might be able to help you... but what's in it for me, I wonder?" Link's heart sank at the thought of being at the mercy of someone who seemed to enjoy his misfortune.

Fading in and out of the shadows around him, she popped her head up directly out of the ground in front of him. Well, not the ground itself, but rather the shadow he cast on the ground. "What do you say, dog? I help you find a magic little trinket, help you walk on two legs again, and then you help me find another magic little trinket I've been searching for?"

Bowing his head, Link could only bark, and shake his head in a silent nod. “I promise,” he thought.

With the magical power of levitation and her ability to move through shadows, Midna was perfectly capable of keeping up with his pace. Nevertheless, she settled down on his back, delivering a sharp kick to his sides. "Come on, slowpoke! You're supposed to be the hero!" she taunted, but despite her cruel words, Link sensed that she was leading him to where he needed to go.

Finally, they arrived within the walls of the temple, the ruins of an ancient civilization long since forgotten. Midna dismounted and looked at Link with a newfound respect. "You know, for a dirty, flea-bitten animal, you're not half bad," she said, still teasing but with a hint of genuine admiration in her voice.

They searched the temple, Midna barking at him whenever she encountered a trap or obstacle, Link forced to use tooth, claw, and raw strength to navigate the ruins, until they finally found the sacred grove they were seeking: the inner sanctum. Resting in a stone pedestal lay what appeared to be an ancient sword, overgrown with vines, but Link could sense a faint light emanating from it.

Touching his nose to it, Link felt the curse lifting. He could feel himself transforming back into his human form. Midna watched him intently, her expression unreadable.

Grasping the hilt of the sword and pulling it lightly from the stone, Link turned to her, feeling a mix of relief and gratitude. "Thank you, Midna," he said. "I couldn't have done it without you."

Ignoring his gratitude, Midna stared intently at the shining blade. “The sword accepted you as its master…”

Feeling a bit stupid, Link glanced down at the weapon. He had drawn it so easily, it hadn’t dawned on him that this was supposed to be a powerful relic.

When he looked up, Midna was holding a dark, ornate crystal to his face. “This thing is the embodiment of the evil magic that Zant cast on you. It’s definitely different from our tribe’s shadow magic.”

Reflexively, Link reached out with his free hand to take the crystal and examine it. So this was the source of his woes?

“Careful!” snapped Midna, slapping the back of his wrist as if she caught him stealing sweets from a jar. “If you touch it, you’ll turn back into a beast!”

Sheathing the magnificent blade, Link rubbed the sting away from his right wrist. “What should we do with it?”

“This thing is too dangerous. It’s probably best if we just leave it here, huh?
But on the other hand…if we kept it, you’d be able to transform into a beast any time you wanted.”

Link’s ears pricked up at that. “I don’t want to ever be a wolf again!”

Midna narrowed her orange eyes, ruefully. “Oh, don’t be so small minded. You can’t tell me you didn’t enjoy the rush? You won’t miss the strength, the speed? You must see how useful this could be!”

Link struggled to find an argument, even a word in reply. Failing that, he kept his silence. He didn’t like trying to talk if he had nothing worth saying.

Sensing that she had won, Midna balanced the crystal gently on her finger, like a child’s toy. “Yes, since Zant was kind enough to give this to us, we should be thankful and use it all we can! If you need it, just call me. I want to keep a low profile, so I’ll hide in your shadow when you’re human, but I can change you whenever I want.”

“You mean whenever *I* want,” Link finally shot back, coldly.

“Just as I said!” giggled Midna, with a wordless shrug that seemed to say, “Silly me!” But Link noticed her expressive eyes were focused. She’d said exactly what she’d meant to say.

That was Midna’s way. Her words, her thoughts, her glances. It was though she was saying three different things at any given moment, and you were a fool to not know which she meant. “You can be a wolf anytime you like! Also, thanks to this thing, you can use my shadow warp magic whenever you want by switching to wolf form.”

She slipped into the shadows, and appeared again behind his shoulder. “Hey, but listen, Link…I’ve got a favor to ask.”

Spiraling the crystal in the air near her hand, so that its light reflected in both of their eyes, she glanced up at him like she was asking her papa to buy her a special toy. “Would you mind coming with me to find something called The Mirror of Twilight? It’s hidden somewhere in Hyrule. Yes, the Mirror of Twilight…our last potential link to Zant.”

Link met her gaze but kept the crystal in his peripheral vision. It was just close enough that he had to pay attention to it, but not quite close enough to be in danger of touching him. “That’s what you were talking about earlier? Your magic little trinket?”

She winked. “Clever boy! You remembered! And here I thought you didn’t retain your human memory as a wolf. You seemed so dense at times, I supposed your mind was slipping. Or is that normal for you? But yes, you’ll help me collect my little trinket, that is if you don’t want to have to worry about ever turning into a wolf again!”

Link felt a hot flash of fury, exactly the sense he felt as a wolf when hunted by shadow beasts. “There is no need to threaten me, Midna. I promised to help you, and I will. I’m a man of my word.”

Midna darted back away from him, her minxish smile replaced by the look of a frightened little girl. She blinked, and with a shake of her hair, tried to regain her composure and growl, “I don’t make threats, wolf boy. It was a promise. I didn’t help you out of sympathy. I need you, and you’re going to repay your obligation to me. That’s that.”

Link narrowed his eyes. "Is that all it was to you? Just a means to an end?"

Midna's smile faded, and her eyes flickered with a hint of guilt. "Well, maybe not just that. You were...kind of fun to tease, I guess." She looked down at the ground. Link wondered if he had been too hard on her. He reached out a hand to place on her head. Just as he was about to thank her for the help she had given him, Midna slipped into his shadow again. “Then again, it was much more fun teasing you as a wolf. I think I’d like a pony ride now!”

The hairs on the back of his neck stood up. Raising his left hand, he grasped the hilt of the sword and started to draw it. Midna appeared in his peripheral vision, the crystal aimed at his eye, when—

Sunlight blazed from behind his head. He had to shut his eyes tight against it, and even then the world was a painful red glow. When he opened his eyes, he found it was not the sun. It was the sword strapped to his back. The holy light dimmed, and when he looked down, he found his attacker laying at his feet.

Link's face darkened. But as he looked at Midna, he noticed that something was different. Her skin was glowing faintly, and its color was different. It took Link a second to figure out precisely what was different about it. It was black and white before, and it was white and black now. That was the same wasn’t it? No, of course! It was inverted.

“Typical!” she spat. “A protection spell. You Hylians are all the same. No appreciation for the subtle distinction between sorcery and shadow magic! Just blast everything with holy light!”

“Are you hurt?” Linked asked, with concern.

She scowled. “If I was, it’d be your fault, Hylian!” She examined her glowing body, which slowly faded back to its original color pattern. “Thank the goddess. It must be a simple warding spell. I’m returning back to normal already. Speaking of which…” she scrambled to find the dropped

crystal. Snatching it up from the grass, she turned back to Link with the speed of a cat. “Let’s see what we can do about turning you back to your true form, wolf boy!” Midna lept lightly into the air, preparing to levitate with her shadow magic. Before Link could think, he had already drawn his sword and leapt back into a fighting stance.

But then, the oddest thing happened. She rose about a foot into the air, a look of wicked triumph on her face, which changed to a look of confusion. For a fraction of a second that felt like an eternity, she hung in midair, then flopped forward, face first, onto the dew-covered grass and moss that coated the stony floors of the temple ruins.

SLAP!

An actual cloud of dust rose into the air from the impact. As it dissipated, Midna swore in a language Link didn’t know, but recognized as her native tongue. “Mudora! My flight? No matter, I’ll just…” she pressed her hands against the ground, then started slapping the stone and the moss in a frenzy. “No! No, no no!!!”

Link instantly understood. Her shadow magic, which had once allowed her to move undetected in the darkness, was now gone. She wasn’t slapping the stone. She was trying to slip into the darkness.

She stood up and shook her head, her orange pony tail slapping against her face. “My hair! I can’t manipulate it! Curse Hylia! May Din, Nayru, and Farore all sit on a golden triangle!”

“Do you think it’s permanent?” Link asked, cautiously. This seemed like a stroke of good luck, but then again, Midna wasn’t going to be much help to him like this.

She stamped her feet and tugged on her hair, but it still danced lifelessly, without its inner glow. “How am I supposed to know, idiot! It’s not my magic!”

As Link approached her, he couldn't help but remember all the times she had teased and kicked him while he was trapped as a wolf. He stood before her, his eyes fixed on hers, and asked, "Well, now you know how it feels to be powerless. Do you remember all the times you treated me like a dog?"

Midna snorted and rolled her eyes. "Oh please, you're not seriously going to bring that up again, are you? I was just having a bit of fun."

Link's eyes narrowed as he took a step closer. "Fun? You think it was fun to treat me like an animal? To kick me and tease me when I couldn't even defend myself?"

Midna crossed her arms and glared at him. "You're being ridiculous. It was just a game. And besides, you were just a stupid wolf. What did you expect from me? Courtly manners?"

Link felt his temper rising, but he took a deep breath and tried to stay calm. "I expected you to treat me with some respect. To understand that I was still me, even though I was trapped in that form. But instead, you treated me like a plaything. And now that I'm free, I can see that you've lost something that was important to you. Maybe it's a sign that you should think about the way you treat others."

Midna huffed and looked away. "I don't need your lectures, hero. And I certainly don't need your forgiveness. I did what I had to do to survive, and I don't regret it."
Link shook his head and turned to leave. As he walked away, he couldn't help but feel a twinge of sadness. He had hoped that Midna would understand how much her actions had hurt him, but it seemed that she was still as stubborn and selfish as ever. As he walked away, he wondered if there was anything he could do to make her see the error of her ways. But for now, all he could do was hope that she would eventually come around.

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Link's heart felt heavy as he walked ahead of Midna, still lost in thought about their conversation. He couldn't help but feel a sense of sadness that their friendship had been strained by her behavior. Well, maybe “friendship” wasn’t the right word. “Relationship?” “Partnership?” Maybe there was no word in Hylian to describe whatever this was, Link mused.

As he walked, memories flooded back to him of his childhood in Ordon Village, where he had been raised by his adopted father Rusl. Link remembered how Rusl had punished him when he had broken several pots as a prank to show off for the other kids. The punishment had been harsh, but Link had never forgotten the lesson. “Odd,” Link wondered. “What made me remember that?”

As he walked, he heard the sound of Midna struggling to keep up with him. She was still without her shadow magic, and it was clear that she was having a hard time keeping pace with him. "I can't believe I'm stuck here like a mortal without any of my powers," she complained bitterly.

Link stopped for a moment to catch his breath, and Midna immediately barked at him with a snarl, “I demand that you carry me this instant!"

"You'll have to learn to walk on your own two feet like the rest of us."

Midna scowled at him. "I'll have you know, I don't take orders from anyone, especially not a mere human like you."

Link rolled his eyes at her. "Fine, suit yourself. But I'm not going to carry you any longer. You'll have to keep up."

Midna crossed her arms pouting, refusing to move. "I refuse to walk. It's beneath me."

"I'm not your dog," he said firmly. "You need to start showing me some respect."

Midna scoffed. "Respect? Oh, and what are you going to do about it, hero? Spank me like a naughty child? You're just a foolish little boy with a sword. You're lucky I even bother to keep you around."

Link's blood boiled at her words. How could she be so disrespectful after all they had been through together? He knew what he had to do.

Link's face hardened. "Midna," he said sternly, "I think it's time I teach you a lesson."

Midna laughed. "You're going to teach me a lesson? You couldn't even catch a fish without my help."

Link ignored her and sat down on a nearby stump. "Come here," he said, motioning for her to approach.

Midna hesitated, but eventually walked over to him. “The idiot wants to sit and chat. Fine. I’ll play along and as he’s prattling on, I’ll pull the crustal from my hair and—"

Without hesitation, he grabbed Midna by the arm and pulled her over his lap.
Midna's eyes widened in shock as he raised his left hand and brought it down hard on her backside.

WHAP!

Midna tensed her whole body in a state of absolute shock. It didn’t really hurt that much, actually. Well, she wasn’t sure if it hurt or not. She just couldn’t believe that that had just happened. “No. He didn’t just spank me. That’s impossible!”

As Midna was pondering this philosophical question, Link rubbed his hand gingerly across her backside, which was surprisingly soft to the touch. Rusl’s wife Uli had taught him that this was a good way to “make sure they’re awake and paying attention” before beginning to spank in earnest. Deciding Midna was most definitely awake, Link drew his hand back and delivered a second sharp smack, the sound echoing through the temple.

Midna gasped, surprised at the sting of Link's hand on her behind. She turned her head to glare at Link, but he was staring at her firmly, waiting for her to fully grasp her situation.

"H-how dare you!" Midna exclaimed indignantly, struggling to get up.

Link pushed down on her back, his strong hands holding her in place. Midna could feel his muscles tensing as he prepared to deliver the punishment.

He spanked her twice, alternating his smacks between her left and right cheeks with two, great, sweeping motions of his arm.

As Link's hand came down on her bottom, Midna let out a gasp. The impact sent a shiver through her body, and she felt the sting of his entire hand and 5 splayed fingers. She couldn't see the damage, but could imagine a near perfect imprint of his large left hand on her left butt cheek. She gritted her teeth and tried to hold back any sound.

Link's hand landed on her bottom again, not quite as forcefully as before, but the sting still intensified. Midna squirmed and kicked her legs, trying to escape, but Link's grip was too strong.

"You deserve this," Link said firmly, his voice low and stern. "You need to learn to treat me with respect. It wasn't my fault that the sword held some kind of protective magic. You were the one who probably activated it when you tried to back stab me."

Midna bit her lip, desperately holding back a retort. His words stung her pride, because she found a part of herself agreed with him. She'd been furious with herself for the past hour. But it was easier to be furious with Link instead. "You call that a spanking? You spank like a grandmother."

"Thank you," answered Link, with four more of the crisp, steady strokes. "I know some grandmothers back in Ordon village and that's a high compliment."

Midna snorted at this wisecrack. She was surprised that a strong, silent type like him could be as quick with his words as he was on his feet. She chuckled as she felt her buttocks bounce and jiggle under the last few spanks. This wasn't that bad, she thought. She could tough this out. But then another thought struck her. This wasn't how hard Link could hit. She knew that well enough from feeling the full force of the first four trembling blows. So why was he going easy on her now? So that she could listen to him lecture her? But that meant…

Midna's snickers of laughter died in her throat. She turned her neck and was able to see Link in a new light. It wasn't going easy on her out of weakness. It was…practiced. "Mine is not the first bottom this man has spanked," Midna thought, with a twinge of horror.

Keeping up his steady rhythm, Link thought back to Rusl's wise words. "Picking up a stick and waving your arm around doesn't make you a sword fighter, kid. There's an art to these things. With the sword, you had to learn timing, precision…Grace. It's like a dance."

"I guess sword fighting is a lot like spanking," Uli had teased them as she watched them spar. Link had learned the wisdom of those words on both the receiving and the giving end of a spanking. You couldn't just wave your arm wildly up and down, and expect good results.

Angling his left arm down, Link aimed a hard spank at the bottom of Midna's left cheek, right where it connected to her upper thigh. "The sit spot," it was called. Just a couple there. He

preferred to save that area for the end, as a sort of coup de'grace. As the name implied, it was the part of Midna's bottom she would be sitting on, or rather would avoid sitting on, for a good while. But not quite yet, thought Link. Just a warning of things to come.

As Link's hand landed on her sit spot, Midna felt her torso rise up and forward slightly, less than a centimeter. As opposed to bringing the force downward, Link had used the lower angle of this last spank to change the pace. It didn't have the same resounding force, but it covered more surface area. Midna actually sensed the friction of palm against buttock, like a stinging itch a moment after being scratched. And just before Midna had time to feel the sting not fade away immediately, Link landed a second identical spank to her right sit spot.

In no particular rush, Link returned to the old, softer pace, leaving Midna to reflect on her situation. As her thoughts turned inward. She thought about all the times she had teased and belittled Link while he was a wolf. She had never thought about how her actions might have hurt him. Now, as she felt the sting of his hand on her bottom, she thought of how she had slapped him on the haunch to make him giddy-up.

With two claps, Link kept the steady rhythm but increased the force, somehow managing to let his hand linger on her bottom for a fraction of a second without missing a beat.

Midna flinched at the impact, but only let out a small hum as she held in the roar of fury she wanted to let out. Her bottom was a light pink hue after only a few swats, but Link knew that wasn't enough to teach her a lesson.

"Ow! Link, that hurts!" Midna protested, twisting on his lap.

"Good, it's supposed to," Link replied sternly, continuing the spanking.

Midna continued to squirm and protest, but her resistance only fueled Link's determination to punish her properly. His hand connected with her bottom at a quicker tempo, each smack making her skin turn a shade redder.

Midna struggled to maintain her tough façade. He could feel her tense up as he began to spank her with more strength, but she quickly tried to cover up her discomfort with sarcasm.

"Well, well, well. Look who's the big tough hero now, spanking little old me," Midna sneered.

Link gritted his teeth and aimed one of the "low angle pitches" square at the center of her backside, nearly covering both cheeks. Then he changed to a less predictable pattern. Quick smacks, hard smacks, little changes here and there. Link thought of the steps of a lively dance he once shared with Illia, as opposed to the slow, predictable waltz favored by the visitors from Castle Town. Now, Midna was his dance partner. His hand and her backside seemed to be dancing to the beat of their own drum.

As he delivered each firm smack, Midna's taunts became more and more angry.

"You think you're so high and mighty, don't you?" she spat. "You wouldn't even be here if it weren't for me. You owe me, and you're just taking out your frustrations on me!"

Link paused the punishment and looked sternly at Midna. "I owe you nothing, Midna. I didn't want to help you because I thought I was your slave. I wanted to help you because I thought you were my friend. But then you act like you're my enemy. Sure, you may have helped me break the curse, but that doesn't give you the right to treat me like a dog."

Midna huffed and crossed her arms. "Fine. Just finish this stupid punishment so we can get on with it."

Link nodded and resumed the spanking, considering whether he had gone too far. Midna didn't talk much about herself, but he had listened to every word she said during the long weeks, and her sense of pride was unquestionable. She might seek revenge on him later for spanking her like a little misbehaving brat. But then he remembered all the times Midna had teased and kicked him while he was trapped as a wolf, and he knew that she needed to learn a lesson.

Midna finally started letting out a yelp with each swat, the sound actually sending some nearby birds flying in panic through the rustling branches of the trees. She tried to push herself up again, but Link held her firmly in place, each blow of his hand landing harder than the last.
As the punishment went on, Midna's behind began to turn a bright shade of red, and she winced and let out a hiss.

"Stop it, Link!" Midna roared, her voice cracking.

Link paused for a moment, his hand still resting on her hot, cherry-red rear end.

"Do you understand why I'm doing this?" Link asked sternly.

Midna huffed and nodded her head. "Because I've been an ass," she growled.
Link nodded in satisfaction and helped Midna up. She rubbed her sore backside, flinching at the pain.

"Now, I want you to go find a switch," Link said, pointing to a nearby tree. "We're not finished yet."

Midna froze. He couldn't be serious! "Link, please stop, you can't do this to me! I'm a…" She stopped herself before she admitted too much. "I mean. I'm sorry?" Midna begged, deliberately trying to make her voice crack with emotion. A little of the wounded puppy dog routine couldn't hurt, right?

Link paused and looked at her sternly. "You're not sorry yet," he said. "Now go and fetch your

switch. Make sure it’s sturdy."

Midna glared at Link, but knew better than to argue. Reluctantly, she trudged over to the nearby grove, still rubbing her glowing red booty furiously. She flashed a hot glance at him, but as he met her gaze he noticed that her fury seemed to melt.

Blinking back a tear, she looked at him almost, coyly? It was the same look she used to give him while teasing him for being trapped as a wolf. With a start, Midna turned her face away, clearly more embarrassed by her tear than her rear. Link found the gesture oddly cute, surprised at the strangeness of the thought.

As Midna disappeared into the trees, marching like an obedient soldier, Link couldn't help but reflect on the situation. He wasn’t sure that he wanted to forgive Midna for the way she had treated him, but he also knew that he couldn't just leave her behind. She was a part of his journey now, and he was determined to see it through to the end. At the same time, he found that he had a strange respect for her. In a way, it would have been easier if she was completely terrible. Her strength and cleverness made her awful words all the more cutting.

He remembered how Rusl and the other parents had asked him to help punish the children of Ordon Village occasionally. Talo, Malo, Beth, even Colin. They’d all found themselves over the lap of “big brother Link” on at least one occasion. There was one especially memorable incident where Talo had led them into the Lost Woods. When their parents discovered their absence and all the village joined the search party, Link had been the one to find the lost children, crying in the woods. Later, after returning safely home, they were crying for a different reason when Link spanked each in turn before sending them home to await their parents’ return. Until the day Link left Ordon Village, the parents of Ordon found that a threat to send a naughty child to Link for a punishment tended to encourage perfect behavior.

Rusl had taught him that the purpose of spanking was to help a child grow into a good person. Forgiveness was required for a proper spanking. Link thought darkly that he would have to work on the forgiveness part for Midna.

[End of Chapter I]

Midna Finally Gets Her Comeuppance
Chapter II
By Yu May

Trying to ignore the sting in her tender bottom, Midna hopped to reach high enough to pull down a strong looking branch. With a flick of her magic hair, she broke it off with a sharp snap. “The effects of that warding spell must finally be wearing off,” she thought. Testing to see if she could hide in the shadows, she found she could not. “It must have a longer effect on my more complicated shadow magic,” realized Midna. But with her hair, would that be enough for a surprise attack? Midna held the switch in her hand, feeling its weight and strong bark. She wasn’t afraid of Link hurting her, but he was definitely capable. Turning him into a wolf was her

best chance to resume control over the situation. “What if he finishes this little disciplinary session and decides to leave me here?” she wondered. But no, Link was the simple, good-hearted sort. She was planning intrigues against someone who would probably die rather than break his word to her.

A thought occurred to Midna. She told herself she wasn’t afraid of Link, but was that entirely true? Was she lying to herself, in the way she hid the truth from Link these past few weeks with her carefully chosen hints and teasing? In one way, she couldn’t be afraid of such a kind soul. But was she really not afraid of him hurting her? A chill breeze brushed against the stinging warmth of a red, hand shaped mark on her bottom. What if she attacked him without holding back? Could she overpower him? What if she backed him into a corner? Would he draw his sword on her? Kill her? Was she willing to risk that just to avoid a little spanking and a blow to her pride? So much was at risk, more than Link could possibly imagine.

In the end, it was really just a question of whether she wanted to go back, face her spanking, and trust him to help her, as a free man, or try to force him into servitude for no reason other than because it suited her.

“I’m not a coward,” she said, out loud, and cut the stray twigs off the rod with a flourish of her magic.

Midna emerged from the woods with a slender birch switch, which she handed to Link reluctantly. Link examined it carefully, making sure it was the right size and shape for the punishment he had in mind. A bit short, he thought, but strong and supple. “You found a fine switch, Midna. This will do perfectly.”

He whipped it through the air to test the feel of it in his hand. Midna stiffened at the sound, just imagining how many times she was about to hear that same “swish” followed by a sharp “crack!” But Link didn’t begin the punishment right away, letting the moment hang.
"Midna," he said, his voice serious. "Why did you treat me that way? Was it just because I was cursed and couldn't speak for myself?"

Midna looked down, her face a mix of shame and anger. "You don't understand, Link. You were just a tool to me, a means to an end. I didn't think of you as a person, just as a way to help me break the curse on my people."

Link's expression darkened. "That's not an excuse, Midna. You could have treated me with some respect, even if you didn't care about me. There was no need to kick and tease me like a dog."

Midna bristled. "Well, you were a dog, technically!" she protested. "And anyway, it's not like I wasn’t useful to you when you were trapped in your cursed form."

Link shook his head. "That doesn't make it okay, Midna. You hurt me, and you need to take responsibility for that. You can't just brush it off and pretend like it didn't matter."

Midna looked away, unable to meet Link's gaze. She knew he was right, but she didn't want to admit it. She'd always thought of herself as tough and independent. The idea of apologizing and admitting she was wrong felt like a blow to her pride.

But as she stood there, watching Link hold the birch switch, she started to feel something else. Regret. Both for what was about to happen to her bottom, but also for what she had done to merit it. She realized that that the hurt she was feeling was the same kind of hurt Link must have felt from her kicks.

Finally, she looked back up at Link. "I'm sorry, Link," she muttered, her voice quiet. "I was wrong to treat you that way. It was cruel and unfair, and I regret it."

Link nodded, but he didn't lower the switch. "I accept your apology, Midna. But I think we still have some unfinished business here."

Midna's eyes widened in surprise as Link gestured for her to turn around. “See that fallen log?” he asked her pointedly. “Go bend over it. I need to use my full arm to use this switch properly.” "Do we have to do this? Isn't it enough that I said I'm sorry?" she demanded, her temporary feelings of sorrow suddenly replaced by her old defiance.

Link's expression was stern. "Saying you're sorry isn't the same as truly being sorry. You're going to take your punishment, Midna. It's the only way we can put this behind us."

Midna hesitated, but she knew he was right. Still, she felt the need to turn her head and pout defiantly as she marched toward her doom. She would accept her fate, but she didn't have to like it.

She bent over the log gingerly, gritting her teeth as Link tapped the birch experimentally against her backside. Midna was painfully aware of how high her bottom was in the air compared to her head. Being bent over Link's lap like a child had been embarrassing in its own way. But with her backside still stinging, poking out in the open air of the forest like an offering to the goddesses, Midna felt a different sensation. Shame. Midna hadn't felt this ashamed of herself since…well, since leaving her home.

Link finally landed the first lash of the birch across her bottom, with a sharp, cracking sound. Midna was unhappy to learn that a switch could deliver a more painful and lasting sting than just a hand. As the switch connected with her bottom again, Midna let out a yelp of pain. It almost felt like it was cutting into her bottom with each thin line, and she struggled to keep still as Link continued to deliver the punishment.

Midna gritted her teeth and told herself to not cry. She was so fixated on fighting back tears, the third stroke caught her off guard. With a yelp, she thrust her hands back to shield her bottom. With no support for her head, she fell face first over the fallen log, her feet dangling in midair.

Link checked his next stroke at the last moment. “Hold still, Midna."

"I am, I am!" Midna bawled, her voice tinged with frustration as she realized she wasn’t holding still at all. A fine picture of composure! She wanted so badly to take her punishment bravely, like a grown up. She wanted Link to look at her and see a strong woman, not a trembling child. With the fourth cutting lash of the switch, that hope vanished, as she actually felt a welt raise on her skin as the branch seemed to peel away from her skin in slow motion. After the fifth fresh stroke, she felt her legs kicking uncontrollably.

“Put your feet down,” Link ordered. Midna didn’t listen, kicking up her right foot and throwing back her hands to put anything between her bottom and the terrible birch switch. She felt his hand gently pulling her foot away from her bottom. Then, he brought the switch down, not on her bottom as she anticipated, but on the sole of her right foot. She gasped at this change of events. After two more stinging strokes to the bottom of her right foot, he placed it down on the ground, and for good measure, lifted her left foot so it wouldn’t feel left out.

After landing the first stroke on her left foot, he paused. “See, if you kick your feet, they might catch the blow of the switch. If you disobey again, I’m sending you out to the woods to fetch a whole bundle of switches, and we can start over from the beginning.” He landed the final two strokes to her left foot and set it down firmly on the ground. “Same for your hands,” he added, and taking her right hand by the wrist, delivered 3 strokes to her palm.

For some reason, Midna found herself shouting with fresh strength at this new predicament. So much of her attention had been focused on her bottom recently, it was as though the rest of her body didn’t exist in some way. As Link released her right hand, she pulled it away and blew on it, trying to cool the 3, angry red marks that criss-crossed it. The cool air did nothing except make her palm prickle.

As expected, she felt Link grasp her left palm and braced herself, wanting to put up a braver front than she had been. “I’m not afraid of a little spanking,” she thought, ferociously, before Link delivered three stripes to her left palm.

When her left hand was released, she obediently put it in front of her, getting it out of range of the switch. She danced a little back and forth, trying to support herself with the soles of her feet and her hands, and finding each stung too much to handle her weight. But she now felt no temptation whatsoever to put them in front of her bottom. “Sorry, butt, you’ll just have to fend for yourself for a while!” Midna thought with a huff.

Link let Midna shift uncomfortably on her hands and feet for a moment as he tried to collect his thoughts. This wasn’t going well. Had he forgotten something? He tried to recall his experiences

in Ordon village. Malo was well behaved, but on the rare occasions Link had punished him, little Malo had acted like a strict professional. Spanking may be an unpleasant business, but Malo treated it with all the seriousness of business. Colin was similar, such a well-behaved kid, and so sensitive, Link felt guilty after delivering the first smack. None of his memories with those two seemed useful at the moment.

On the other hand, Talo had been a trouble maker and his parents had frequently found work for Link as a “hired hand.” Like Midna, Talo had a tendency to act tough and not give an inch, but at least he knew how to hold still. Beth reminded Link of Midna too, but in a different way. Always a drama queen at heart, Beth tended to cry and bawl before the spanking even began, hoping to convince Link to go easy on her. Link eventually learned to ignore Beth’s crocodile tears until he heard the real thing. Midna had that same dramatic flair, but was also much tougher than Beth. He had already punished Midna more harshly than he had ever punished any of the kids of Ordon. Well, except for Illia. Link swallowed a lump in his throat at the memory.

“A good spanking should end in tears,” Uli had once told him matter of factly when he had been on the receiving end. As a babysitter and “hired hand” Link had found the wisdom in Uli’s words. Real tears were a sign that the message had gotten through. They couldn’t be faked, even by Beth with her method acting approach to being spanked. He’d caught a glimpse of a couple tears from Midna, but her force of will when it came to hiding her tears was incredible. The only time Link had seen that sort of fortitude was…Illia.

Yes, even sweet, compassionate Illia had been in need of discipline over the years. In fact, it was Illia’s father Bo who had started the tradition of making Link a “hired hand” for child discipline in Ordon. When Illia had visited the Ordon goats and forgotten to close the gate behind her, the entire flock escaped. After the desperate round up was complete, Illia confessed her guilt to Link before speaking even to her father. When he urged her to tell Bo the truth, Illia promised she would if Link would come with her. As predicted, Bo was disappointed.

But to Link’s shock, Bo wasted no time in spanking Illia in front of him, then proposed that Link should do the honors of finishing Illia’s spanking, as it was his hard work that Illia had destroyed. Link initially refused, horrified at the thought of ever hurting a friend like Illia. But Illia argued that if she was going to get another licking in either case, she’d feel less guilty if Link would do it. She seemed so sincerely sorry, Link couldn’t bear the thought of leaving her to face a second spanking alone. Bo guided him through the process of spanking Illia with the same fatherly concern he used to teach Link the art of goat herding. And just like Uli had taught him, Link had spanked Illia to tears. For the following fortnight, Illia had been sent to Link for an additional spanking to reinforce the message first thing in the morning, every morning. The tradition was set. Bo talked up Link’s skill as a “hired hand” around town. Link never understood why, until Illia admitted proudly that she’d never cried during one of her father’s spankings. Link had been the first to accomplish that.

Link swallowed at the memories of spanking Illia over the years. Ilia and Midna were certainly not the same when it came to how they accepted the fate of being spanked. Illia was polite,

remorseful, compliant, almost helpful in a strange way. But with all that, Illia never cried easily. If only there was a way to convince Midna to take on Illia's "bend over and accept your fate with dignity" mindset.

At the thought of Midna, Link's thoughts returned to the present moment. He caught a glimpse of Midna's orange eye looking back at him. He'd been stalling long enough. Giving her a few moments to regain her composure and think about the fresh welts on her hands and feet had been a good idea, but a good spanking should never be boring. Link met Midna's curious glance with a knowing grin. Embarrassed to be caught staring, she snapped her head forward sullenly. Link felt like he'd solved a particularly tricky puzzle. He had expected Midna to just accept her spanking and learn from it, but what she needed to learn first was how to learn from a spanking.

"All right, Midna, that was twice you've disobeyed an order and struggled. How are your hands and feet feeling?"

Midna blew a wild strand of orange hair from her face with a huff and rolled her eyes. "They hurt. My hands hurt, my feet hurt, my butt hurts. What do you expe—"

TWHIP!

Midna howled as beautifully as he ever did in wolf form, her cry trailing off into a moan at the end. Just like when using his hand, Link found that using a cane or birch required a precise flick of the wrist. A little variety didn't hurt, but by aiming so that the very end of the cane landed on target, he could muster more force and raise a thicker welt. Just like an underhanded grip on a sword, thought Link, admiring the effects.

"That's another thing, your attitude. Defiance and rudeness aren't going to help you one bit in this situation, Midna. You think it's courage, but it's plain stubbornness. Ever seen a mule?" Midna flashed her wicked grin and looked back. "I think I've ridden one recently!" Midna's impish expression vanished with a look of dawning comprehension. Link had moved to her left side, aiming a whistling backhanded stroke so the end of the cane landed squarely on her right cheek, leaving a welt perfectly matching the one on her left.

It turned out the only reply to Midna's wise crack was the crack of the birch as it snapped in half.

Link looked at it for a moment, then tossed it aside with a shrug. "Pity, I wasn't quite finished. No matter, you will fetch a new switch, and you can expect an additional spanking with Epona's hairbrush. That should suffice to bring the message home, for today."

In a panic, Midna scrambled up off the log and turned to face Link, hiding her bottom from sight. "No fair! You said you'd only send me to fetch another switch if I kicked and broke the last one!"

"Actually, I said if you disobeyed again, I would send you to fetch a whole bundle of switches. Thank you for reminding me."

“But I didn’t disobey! It’s not my fault the switch broke!”

Link pointed his finger emphatically, with a forceful gaze that silenced Midna. “First, it broke because I whipped you with it. I whipped you with it because you back-talked, immediately after I warned you about your attitude. Deliberate defiance is disobedience. Second, I didn’t say you wouldn’t get another spanking if you obeyed, I said you would be fetching that bundle of switches if you disobeyed. I’d already decided to introduce you to the hairbrush from the start, regardless of how you acted during the switching. Third, spanking is a punishment for children. It ends when the naughty child has learned her lesson. That’s you, Midna, and you haven’t learned a thing yet. I’ve known some kids who could be brats, but they were at least smart enough to shape up when they found themselves bent over a knee, mine or their parents. I’ve never seen someone take a spanking as poorly as you have. Are you that afraid?”

Midna bared her fangs. “I’m not afraid of anything, let alone anything as childish as a spanking.”

“Then fetching those switches should be no problem, should it?”

Midna felt like something was caught in her throat. She opened her mouth and closed it again with a pout. Damn it all! Why couldn’t she come up with a comeback to that? She should be leading this backwater villager around by the nose.

“Very well, master, I will fetch your bundle of switches, and you can wear out the whole lot of them on my heinie, if it pleases you. But I won’t give you the satisfaction of seeing me cry.”

“I am not your master, Midna, I am your ally. Or at least, I want to be. And I take no satisfaction from any of this. I don’t want to hurt anybody, ever. You mistreated me. You attacked me, bringing a curse upon yourself. And then you took your frustration out on me. If we’re going to be friends—ah, allies—then there has to be an understanding between the two of us.”

“So the understanding is, if I don’t do anything you like, I get my butt spanked? Some partnership!”

“You have magic, don’t you? You have a crystal you can threaten me with. Well, fair enough. If I can trust you not to misuse that crystal, you can trust me to never spank you again. But the fact that I can spank you, well, that’s my magic touch, Midna.”

At the mention of her magic, Midna thought of her hair. She prodded the ground with her foot again, testing to see if she could slip into a shadow. No luck. She caught a glimpse of Link’s face as he focused on her foot. “Shit! Does he know?”

It was finally Link’s turn to give her a knowing smile. “Still can’t slip into the shadows? Well, at least your hair’s magic has been restored. It had its inner glow back when you returned with the switch.”

“Well, for someone who’s useless for spotting traps, you don’t seem to miss a thing when it comes to an opponent! Guess that comes in handy as a swordsman…and a wolf!”

“Thank you, it does. And the fact that you came back at all, knowing what would happen, means that you’re not a coward. You could have used that hair of yours to stop this any time. Why didn’t you?”

Midna bit her bottom lip. “I…I told you I’m not afraid of a spanking. And…I need you.”

Link let her answer hang in the air. Midna felt the discomfort of it. “The strong, silent type act.”

Midna sighed. “I’ll go cut us some more switches. Will…ten be enough?” Link only nodded in reply.

Desperate to at least win a tiny victory, Midna used her hair’s magic to whisk ten sturdy branches from the nearest trees, cleaning them and presenting them in the wink of an eye. She only wished she had a ribbon to tie them together with a bow.

Link examined each in turn and nodded approval. Then he pulled, of all things, a woman’s hair ribbon from his gear and tied them into a neat bundle. “Probably a gift from a pretty flower of a country girl,” fumed Midna.

Link finally broke his stony silence. “Now we’re getting somewhere. All that’s left is to give you some practice at taking your licks.” Midna approached the log to assume the position, stepping gingerly at the memory of trying to balance her weight on her still-smarting hands and feet. But before she could lay across it, Link stopped her. “Don’t just lie across it. I made a mistake letting you do that last time. You’re not a bump on a log. Stand your feet firmly in front of it, bend over, and press your hands on top of the log to support you.” Midna gave the appearance of obeying, shifting her feet uncomfortably and floating her hands just above the rough surface of the bark. The welts were screaming in protest.

A gentle tap of Link’s birch bundle against the fresh welts on her bottom snapped Midna’s attention back to Link.

“That won’t do. You have to be solid. Think of it as taking a fighting stance.”

“The welts…It hurts too much…”

“Only because you think it hurts too much. The welts are going to hurt no matter what you do. Dancing around on ‘em is probably making it worse. Concentrate on your stance. Your whole body, not the small part that hurts.”

Midna obeyed, and after a flash of pain from the welts, she found she could indeed push through it. It was as though Link was teaching her sword fighting for a moment. Almost…dignified.

“Now lift your head up, and stick out your buttocks.”

Midna scowled. “And…it’s gone!”

“Eyes forward. Find a point to focus on and keep your attention on it.”

Midna found a bird’s nest and fixed her eyes on it furiously. “Stupid birds!” she thought.

“Arch your back a little. Think of yourself as a soldier: ‘Present arms!’”

“Ugh! How is this supposed to help me?”

In answer, Link tapped the birches against her, not enough to hurt (well, except that the welts hurt at the slightest touch!) But hard enough so that Midna felt her body rock forward slightly.

“Feel that motion? Now that your stomach’s not pressed against that log, the impact of the birch has to go through you. Your goal is to accept that, but also to resist it.”

“Are you sure you didn’t get spanked on your head as a child?” teased Midna, before cursing herself for mouthing off again.

Link chuckled. “Good one. Since you made me laugh, I won’t give you an additional spanking for talking back.” But he did slap the birches against her playfully, with just a tad more firmness than the previous test stroke.

“Don’t test your luck, Midna,” they both thought.

“In sword fighting, a stance must be strong, but also flexible. You must be like the rock, and the river. When you feel the birch, it’s going to carry you forward, so you need to resist it to keep me from sending you barreling over the log again.”

Midna rolled her eyes, before feeling a third stroke, just a bit harder than the second. This time, she felt the rolling motion and caught herself. As she did, she felt herself press her weight into the birches. “It’s like I have to help you spank me,” she muttered.

Link landed a fourth stroke, this time, hard enough to have some sting to it. “Exactly!”

“So, he heard that. Damn those pointy ears of his!” thought Midna, keeping silent this time.

WHACK!

The fifth stroke was probably at about half his full strength. Midna sucked in a breath as the welts on both cheeks tingled.

“Don’t forget to relax, Midna. You can’t keep a muscle tensed for long. Breathe in. Breathe out.”

Midna scrunched up her face, then let out her breath. She felt at ease.

And with the sixth stroke, she knew it had begun. No longer holding back, Link struck with the force of a swordsman. But Midna was ready. She found her body gracefully accept each stroke, and strangely, found she could mentally accept each one before it landed. But the 12th stroke caught her off guard and sent her forward, catching herself on the log with her elbows. She looked back, terrified that this would merit her another spanking. How many was she up to? But Link had mercifully paused.

“Better, Midna. But you’re relying on predicting the rhythm. You need to move with the opponent.”

“Are you going to teach me to sword fight next? Hopefully you don’t knock me on my ass!”

“It wouldn’t hurt. Or rather, the part about learning to use a sword wouldn’t hurt. Trying to predict an opponent’s rhythm is a losing game. By the time you’ve finished arguing with yourself—”

WHAP!

A surprise spank!

“—they’ve got you! Try not to think about what your body is doing. Let it move on its own. I want you to concentrate on something else now.”

“What, that bird nest on the tree? That’s what I picked to focus my attention on.”

“Good. Now I want you to close your eyes. Visualize that same bird nest.”

Midna closed her eyes and thought of the nest, complete with birds, but a quick stroke of the birch shook her out of it. “Hey! I wasn’t ready!”

“Would you complain to an enemy who was striking you? Accept, and concentrate.”

THWACK!

Midna had a retort come to mind, something to do with stabbing her opponent in the ass while his back was turned, but chose to hold her tongue.

WHAP!

She finally brought up the mental image of the bird's nest again. Link seemed to be taking his sweet time. Maybe he was finished?

WHIP!

Birds! Something about birds! Stupid little peckers!

TWHIP! WHUP!

Two in quick succession. Link was back into his free form style.

THWAP!

Damn! There was no way for Midna to predict this.

WHACK!

Birds! Baby birds in a nest!

TWHICK!

Midna saw the baby birds clearly in her mind.

THWUP!

Over the image, she saw her own body, gliding forward gracefully as the impact of the birches rippled through her.

SMACK!

She'd always loved watching the Twilight birds take flight, the rolling motion of their wings.

CRACK!

Midna's eyes snapped open, feeling some of the birches snap across her with the last stroke. As she gazed at the bird's nest, she saw a mother bird returning to it.

Glancing at the nearly spent bundle of switches, Link whistled. He was impressed that Midna was such a quick study in the art of taking a spanking. She was accepting her punishment beautifully.

“Well done, Midna. Only four of your ten switches have survived. No point using them now, and they may come in handy later. As promised, we will finish by introducing you to Epona’s hairbrush.”

With a quick gesture, he produced a sturdy wooden hairbrush from his pack. Midna turned to look as Link held it in his left hand, and patted it against his right palm. She noticed it was ornately decorated with a carved image of a horse on the back. Somehow, she found that fitting. It was handsome, yet simple. It also seemed fitting that her punishment wasn’t over. Now that she had finally accepted her situation, she felt like everything that came before didn’t count in a fashion. Midna wanted to be punished properly, and she wanted to show she could take it properly too.

“Link, Can you…Please bend me over your lap again. I’m afraid I can’t hold still much longer without your help.” She tried to lift herself up from the log, and felt the welts stretch with a twinge. Without looking, she knew that there must be crisscrossing welts covering most of her lower cheeks.

“You took it bravely, Midna. You squirmed a bit, but stayed in place. But I don’t think I’ll bend you over my lap this time. I’m going to take you across my knee.”

Midna scrunched up her face. “Isn’t that the same thing?”

“Not quite. I find this particular position better for aiming a hairbrush. But it’s quicker to show you than it is to explain,” said Link, rather pleased at a chance to demonstrate his experience in this area. He sat himself on the same log and set a soft blanket he used for travel across the log to his right. Then he picked Midna up gently and set her down facing him on his right knee, guiding her forward so that her upper torso rested on the blanket.

Midna blushed as she felt her legs spread apart, Link’s knee providing support to the lower half of her body. Midna suddenly felt even more exposed than she had been bent over the log, and thanked the goddesses that at least her bottom was facing away from Link. The delicate balance made her completely dependent on him to hold her in place. But it was also strangely comfortable, being pressed against the soft blanket and the thick wool of Link’s trousers.

As Link twirled Epona’s hairbrush in his left hand with a practiced flourish, he caught it deftly and tapped it a few times against each of Midna’s stinging cheeks. Even those gentle love pats were enough to send an angry stinging sensation through the welts, like the after effects of a sunburn.

Just a moment ago, Midna had been thinking about how she deserved this. How she wanted what was coming to her. She felt like she had to say something, partially to hold off the onslaught for a few precious seconds, and partially to do something to restore her sense of pride.

“Don’t you dare let me off easy,” she snapped, with a hint of her teasing voice. “You almost had me crying like a baby before you broke that switch. Couldn’t you tell wailing away with it like that wasn’t a good idea? You clearly must not have much experience as a disciplinarian.”

Midna felt the bravado fade from her voice even as she tried it. She realized that, with her in this position, Link could aim down blows vertically from high above his head. She suddenly had a vision of watching him split a moblin’s skull with a similar style of blow with his sword. Plus, with her legs dangling across either side of his thigh, she couldn’t tense up her bottom like she could before. That strange sense of relaxation came over her again.

“You don’t show fear for a second, I’ll give you that,” answered Link, impressed.

Wasting no more time, he brought the hairbrush down with a sharp “pop” across her right cheek, right where it connected to her upper thigh. Midna had no clue what a “sit spot” was, but Link had decided it was time to return his attention to the area for the grand finale. “A perfect position on the posterior to place some perfunctory paddling punishment,” Rusl had once jested.

The second stroke landed on Midna’s left sit spot. The stinging was more intense than before, and Midna cried out louder, no longer able to pretend she was gifted with an invulnerable butt. The third thudding blow sunk deep into her flesh, covering the surface area of most of her lower cheek, and gracing across some of the welts from the birch. The thought of how different this felt from a switch was interrupted by a second wave of stinging pain from the welts, like an angry protest.

Midna was feeling all the impact rippling through her bottom, combined with the sharp sting that usually only a switch could provide. Link was indeed a master at more than the sword.

Midna had been so close to breaking down completely during the birching, it didn’t take long for the closing argument from the hairbrush to have its desired effect. The tears were back, and instinctively, Midna still wanted to fight them.

But why? Why did she want to fight the tears? To prove she was strong? She already knew she was strong. But was she really? She had used Link. Used his strength as her tool, because deep down, she knew that her bold front wasn't enough.

All her shame and regret welled up in her heart, pouring out of her in waves into her tears, rolling down her cheeks. At the third stinging blow, she shut her eyes tight, the world disappearing into blackness.

All along, she had been just pretending. Her “strength” had been a lie, hiding her fear. Hiding behind Link's strength. But now, she had nothing to hide from Link anymore. All was laid bare before him. And with each wave of fresh pain she felt this man's strength.

For the first time in her life, she felt like she didn't have to pretend to be strong for someone else. And as Midna accepted her weakness, accepted the pain, it was as if the fire in her flesh was burning away that weakness.

All her shame and regret welled up in her heart, pouring out of her in waves into her tears, rolling down her cheeks. At the third stinging blow, she shut her eyes tight, the world disappearing into blackness.

After the fourth slow, deliberate stroke, Link gradually picked up the pace, just like riding Epona from a walk, to a trot, to a canter, to a gallop. By the tenth spank, Link had reached the “cantor tempo” and concentrated on painting his target a nice, even coat of red-violet.

By this point, it became impossible for Midna to count any further. The sting of each well-earned blow faded into the next. In her mind, everything faded into a black void, punctured by shining stars. Her bottom. Her bottom! The whole of the world had ceased to exist. It was like the eternal darkness of twilight.

With a force of will, she opened her eyes, and the whole world seemed to shine with stars around her, the same stars she had seen in the blackness.

As Midna caught a glimpse of her tears dripping down, glistening on the grass below her face, she felt a strange new sensation filling her heart. Relief. It was the relief of knowing that she was a bad little girl, and Link was punishing her for her behavior exactly like she deserved. She knew that he cared for her, and that he wanted her to be a better person.

Midna closed her eyes as the tears returned, but this time she didn’t fight them. She welcomed them. And with a long, shuddering cry, she wept until all her tears were finally cried out.
"I'm sorry, Link," Midna sobbed, her voice barely a whisper. Then she took a breath and spoke with the commanding voice of a queen. "I am so, so sorry! I shouldn't have teased you like that. I didn't mean to be so mean to you. I just...I don't know how to act sometimes…”

The brush paused as Link raised it high above his head, his eyes meeting Midna’s. She winced as she heard her own words, realizing she was still making excuses.

“No, that's not it. All along I knew I was being cruel to you. I…enjoyed it. I'm just a spoiled, naughty little girl! Can you forgive me? You can spank me as much as you want! Please, please forgive me!"

Link stopped the punishment and helped Midna up, holding her as she cried. "It's okay, Midna," he whispered. "You've learned your lesson." He hesitated before finally adding the words he knew were necessary. "I forgive you."

Midna was surprised by Link's forgiveness, but also grateful. She had expected him to hold a grudge, to go on treating her with the contempt she never failed to show him. She knew that she

needed to do better, to be a better friend to Link. And with that realization, she vowed to change her ways.

"Thank you, Link," she said, wiping away her tears. "I won't forget this, and I promise I'll treat you better in the future."

Link nodded, his expression softening. "I know you'll keep your promise, Midna. I trust you. I never want to have to do that again."

Midna felt a thrill at the last words. She felt the sincerity in them, but she also understood the implicit meaning. “Idiot,” Midna thought, but didn’t dare say out loud.

Deciding she couldn’t resist teasing Link just a little for this slip, she pushed away from his embrace to look him in the eyes defiantly. “That means you’re willing to do it again if you have to. I wonder if you even thought about that possibility. Gonna’ spank me every time I act out of line, now?”

“I, well, I really don’t want to. I don’t get any pleasure out of it,” stammered Link, suddenly realizing with a blush that he’d said something that was the opposite of what he’d meant to say.

“You really don’t, do you? Not one hint of enjoyment? What about all that business with the switch and the hairbrush? You’re really good at this. One day, you’ll make some farm girl a happy woman, and probably keep at least ten children in line with that whole routine…and maybe your wife too,” she hissed with delight, flashing her sharp teeth in a wicked grin.

“What? No, not my wife. I’d never…I mean, it’s a punishment for children.”

“Is that what I am? Is that what you see when you look at me? A child? That punishment was pretty strict for a child, wolf boy. I think that was a punishment fit for a full-grown woman. You sure you wouldn’t enjoy spanking a pretty farm wife, just a little? Maybe if she asked for it?”

Link swallowed. He hadn’t wanted to admit it, but the thought that Midna was not a child had occurred to him before. Her wit, her way with words. At some level, he’d always sensed she must be much older than she appeared. Had that really just slipped his mind? And, he hadn’t enjoyed it, had he? “I…I don’t want to hurt anyone. Never. Not you, not the creatures I fight, not anyone, not unless…”

“Not unless it’s necessary, right?” finished Midna.

“Yes,” answered Link, lamely. It suddenly occurred to him that without Midna, he might not have made it very far on this quest.

Midna tilted her head, positively beaming. “Well, if you never want to do it again, I’ll just be careful to behave myself so you never have to!”

With a cough, Link straightened up stiffly. “Yup! If you ever treat me like a dog again, you'll find yourself back over my knee! But that won’t really be a prob--” Midna silenced him with a commanding wave of her hand.

“Then again, it’s not really fair that only you get to decide when a spanking is necessary, is it?”

“What are you suggesting? That you can spank me?”

“Oh, not at all. You’re such an innocent farm boy, you’re not capable of ever being as naughty as me.”

“Well, in the future, if you aren’t willing to accept a spanking, then I promise I’ll never spank you again.”

“You’re so slow! That’s not what I meant either. What if I think I need a spanking and you’re too much of a gentleman to see that I deserve one?”

“Well, what am I supposed to do if that happens?”

“Don’t worry, if I ever think that I need a spanking, I promise to ask you for one. Think about it. It’d be much better to have a quick spanking over and done with than to let it build up for months like we did for this one, right?”

“I… I suppose. Wait, are you asking me to spank you again?”

“Are you kidding? After the severe chastisement you just gave me, I won’t be able to ride on your back for a week. But if I do ask you for a spanking, at any point in the future, it’s only fair that you give me one, right? Maybe a little less severe than this one, but you seem to have a knack for choosing a punishment that suits the crime.”

“Okay, Midna. I don’t really understand, but that makes sense. If you ask me for a spanking, I mean, really ask me sincerely, I guess I can give you one if it will help keep you in line.”

“Oh, thank goodness. I was worried for a second that I was never going to get spanked again. Well, I’ll hold you to that promise, master spanker.”

Link pondered Midna's request. Somehow, it felt like there was something off about the whole situation. It was as though Midna was a queen, matter of factly giving a servant orders, but the order didn't make much sense to him.

"Oh, and by the way, you'll have to carry me. I can barely walk after that brutish beating."

"Oh! Of course, let me help you." Link bowed apologetically, and reached to pick up Midna.

"Oh, hold on, don't be so eager to take an order. You're like a puppy! Let me do that right! Ahem!" Midna cleared her throat and took a step back. Then she curtsied. "My noble knight, would you please grace your lady by carrying her? Your most generous guiding hand of instruction, and your rod of correction, and your masterful skill with the hairbrush, has left your lady with a most chastened and sore derriere."

With an elegant twirl on one foot, Midna spun around and bent over with a flourish. With her hands on her knees, she arched her back, oh so slightly, so that her well-spanked behind was presented like a heart container to Link.

For the first time, it suddenly dawned on Link just how grown up this seemingly childish imp really was. "Very well, my lady, allow me to help you."

Wrapping his left arm under her hip, he picked her up gently so that she could sit with her arms around his neck and her lower weight supported by his arm.

Midna winced as she felt the cloth of his tunic press against her sit spots, but before Link could apologize, she delicately placed a finger against his lips. "Now, now. It's good for me to remember my punishment, isn't it? There's no changing the past, only learning from it."
Link could think of nothing to say, so he only nodded, with that stubborn strength that was starting to strike Midna as stupidly sweet. The two of them continued their journey, with a newfound respect and understanding between them.

Midna's shadow powers returned that night. "The effects of the protective spell may have been strengthened by that temple. Or maybe that sword of yours knows I'm sorry and has accepted my apology," she mused out loud. She lifted herself out of Link's embrace and flitted into the shadows.

Link found that he was feeling a newfound respect for Midna. She had taken her punishment without complaint.

Well, not exactly without complaint, but she had certainly taken it heroically. and had even apologized for her behavior. He realized that he had misjudged her before, and that she was more than just a teasing imp.

As they made camp for the night, Midna sat down next to Link and looked up at the stars.

"I've been thinking about what you said," she said. "About how we need to work together to rescue Hyrule. You're right. I shouldn't be so selfish."

Link smiled at her. "It's alright. We all make mistakes."

Midna smiled back, and Link noticed how pretty she looked when she wasn't scowling. He was beginning to see her in a new light.

"I'll do whatever it takes to help you," Midna said. "I promise."

Link nodded, feeling a sense of relief. He had been worried that things between them would be awkward after the punishment, but it seemed that they were back to being friends again.

As they settled down for the night, Link laying on his back on the tall grass and Midna's head nestled on his chest for a pillow, Midna couldn't help but think about the punishment she had received. It had been embarrassing and painful, but it had also been a wake-up call. As she felt Link's chest rise and fall beneath her head, Midna realized that she had been taking Link for granted, and that he deserved better.

She resolved to treat him with more respect in the future, and to make up for her past behavior. Suddenly, she felt a jolt as Link's hand rested on her sore bottom. Midna started awake, flashing an angry glance at him, only to find Link snoring, fast asleep. As the initial twinge of pain faded, Midna found the warm buzzing strangely comforting. "Idiot, doesn't even know what his hands are holding onto."

She closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep, feeling a sense of peace and contentment that she hadn't felt in a long time.

[The End]